

upon this subject the observation of bilateral ovaries in another specimen of the Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*), "approximately" thirty specimens of the Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*), "fewer" specimens of Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*) and one specimen each of the Red-tailed Hawk (previously noted), the Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*), and the Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*).

In so far as the evidence now available is concerned, it is apparent that bilateral ovaries occur in adult female hawks of certain species. Apparently this condition is common or even usual in some species and less common or rare in others. The relative size of the right ovary, when it is represented, appears to vary among different species. It would seem that both European and North American members of the genus *Accipiter* frequently exhibit bilateral ovaries in the adult condition, but certainly this condition is by no means confined to the genus *Accipiter*. In none of the nine adult female owls (five species) examined by the writer was any indication of bilateral development of the ovaries found.

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
NEW YORK, N. Y.

A LETTER TO THE GAME OFFICIALS OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY MYRON E. STORY

The open duck season of the year 1933 is now a thing of the past and, as the result of my experience and observations, I am prompted to make a few comments about conditions in general, which I ask you to consider carefully as coming from a duck hunting sportsman, who is primarily interested in the saving of wild fowl from extermination and not "killing the limit" each time he goes after ducks.

My duck hunting is done in the territory near the mouth of the Connecticut River, in the vicinity of such places as Essex, Saybrook, and Great Island, and it is the "black duck" or "dusky mallard" to which my comments apply. The territory mentioned is typical of every other place on our coast where these ducks are found, and my statements will apply in general to all such places.

A few days before the season opened in October, I visited Great Island for the purpose of discovering where the ducks were most numerous and, although the Island has been so thoroughly drained that all of the old "saltholes" are now perfectly dry and the place is not nearly so attractive to the birds as it used to be, I found a generous supply of local ducks in the creeks on the Island. The birds were very

tame and unafraid and I found it possible to stalk a number of bunches of ducks in the creeks and approached some of them to within a very few yards before they took flight.

The first day of the open season (Monday) I found many groups of hunters in place, bright and early, and *live* decoys formed a part of the equipment of nearly every outfit. The shooting started at 11:40 A. M. and the poor birds were murdered unmercifully from then until dark, as they were tame and bewildered, and could not resist the lure of the live callers.

You know, of course, that the duck hunter who uses live decoys is almost invariably after his "limit" and he shoots all of the ducks he can while they are at rest on the water, and if he can kill several on the water with one shot he is greatly elated, and it frequently happens that he is able to do just that. The slaughter continued unabated during the week and when I again visited the place, the following Saturday afternoon, I saw very few ducks, probably about a dozen in all, and they were very wild.

I have been to the same place several times since then and have seen and shot very few ducks during the season (not more than three in any one day and some days not any; I do not use live decoys). Two of the days in particular were ideal as to weather but still the birds did not appear and I saw only six on one of those two days.

The last day of the season I talked with a member of one party who were hunting over live decoys, and he remarked how difficult it was for him to give away the birds he shot. That will just give you an idea how the man with live decoys will keep after the ducks even though he has no use for them.

My observations indicate that very few ducks came to us from the north, and it is my opinion that practically all of the ducks shot in our marshes this year were locally hatched and reared; thanks to the work of your Department in planting wing clipped birds for breeders last spring.

There is one conclusion to be drawn from the above and it is this: ducks are very scarce! Probably you have heard reports indicating that the ducks are plentiful, and some duck hunters do make that statement but, if they know anything about the matter, they know that it is not a fact, and they simply tell that tale in order to keep the season open and the limit high. All the talk about drought, disease, and vermin is partly true and, no doubt, the ducks would be more numerous the first of the season if we could completely control those things, but in the last analysis it is the *gun* and *live decoys* that are causing the rapid extermination of the black duck.

If this bird is to survive two things must be done now, and I call on you in the name of all sportsmen who are interested in preserving a reasonable amount of duck hunting for future years, to prohibit absolutely the use of live duck decoys and to limit the kill of each hunter to not more than four per day and twenty in the season.

The Grand Old State of Connecticut should take pride in being the first state to lead off in a movement to save the ducks and with such a leader the States of Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey would be glad to follow. Rigid enforcement of such restrictions would result in the rapid increase in the number of ducks and in three years' time they would be with us again in great numbers, and they would stay with us, if the restrictions were not removed.

Of course, you will say at once that if an attempt is made to enact laws to fix such restrictions the opposition will prove too great and that it can not be done. It is true that strong opposition would immediately develop from all commercial interests involved in duck killing, including some duck hunting clubs, but what of it? Such interests have had the upper hand long enough and I know that every sportsman worthy of the name would be in favor of a much smaller bag limit than the present one, and every duck hunter interested in saving the ducks, who has witnessed the slaughter resulting from the use of live decoys, would be in favor of prohibiting the use of them.

All the talk about "studying the situation" and the effort to obtain money at this time for that purpose is purely bunk; the ducks need real protection now and the only way to protect them is to stop nearly all or perhaps all of the killing at once, then nature will do the rest.

If the duck stamp tax idea should pass and the money thus obtained could be used to restore drained marshes, which were once duck breeding and feeding areas, it would no doubt help the duck crop wonderfully, if there are any ducks left to help when the drained areas are restored, but there will be no ducks left if we do not stop shooting them this year! The restoration of drained marshes will take years and the ducks can't wait.

It is a lamentable fact that a heavy percentage of the men who kill ducks consists of a class of men who are after ducks and dollars, regardless of anything else, and their voices have made more noise than ours in the past, but it is time that the Conservationists and the ducks now have all of the attention, and we look to you to make sure that the duck has this attention before the opening of the 1934 duck hunting season.

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.